

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SANTIAGO 10855

LIMDIS - RESEARCH

DEPT PASS OPIC

EO 11652: GDS
TAGS: EINV, OGEN, GY, VE, PN, BL, PE, CI
SUBJECT: CONTRACTOR TRAVEL IN CONNECTION WITH OPIC-SPONSORED
RESEARCH

REF: STATE 275789

1. THE EMBASSY DID NOT KNOW THAT DEPARTMENT OF STATE RESEARCH COUNCIL (DSRC) HAD CLEARED AN OPIC-SPONSORED STUDY ON DISPUTE SETTLEMENT TO INCLUDE FIELD STUDY IN CHILE. WE SEE PROBLEMS OF CONSIDERABLE POLITICAL SENSITIVITY IN MANNER IN WHICH THE SCHEDULED VISIT TO SANTIAGO HAS BEEN STRUCTURED. MOREOVER, WE ARE NOT SURE HOW MANY OF THE LEADING PERSONAGES TO BE INTERVIEWED CAN BE LOCATED IN SANTIAGO. FINALLY, THE PROMINENCE OF MR. SIDNEY WEINTRAUB AND HIS PREVIOUS ASSOCIATION WITH CHILE IN THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC ERA FURTHER COMPLICATES THE SITUATION.

2. DEPARTMENT IS AWARE THAT MUCH OF THE LEADERSHIP OF FORMER ALLENDE REGIME WAS IMPRISONED, EXILED OR DRIVEN UNDERGROUND. THERE MAY BE NO PROBLEM IN LOCATING SOME OF THE TECHNICAL
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PEOPLE LISTED IN REFTEL, BUT WE WONDER ABOUT SUCH PEOPLE AS

ORLANDO CANTUARIAS, FORMER MINISTER OF MINES, LEFTIST LAWYER AND ONE-TIME SECRETARY GENERAL OF RADICAL PARTY'S NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE; CARLOS MATUS, SOCIALIST, WHO WAS DETAINED ON DAWSON ISLAND FOLLOWING THE MILITARY COUP; AND CARLOS CONTRERAS, WHO MAY BE THE CARLOS CONTRERAS LABARCA WHO WAS COMMUNIST PARTY SECRETARY GENERAL FROM 1931-1946.

3. EVEN ASSUMING THAT, WITH SUCH LEFTIST BACKGROUNDS, THESE AND OTHERS ON THE LIST ARE STILL IN SANTIAGO (WE ARE CHECKING THIS), WE HAVE MISGIVINGS ABOUT BEING SEEN TO CONTACT SUCH PRESUMED ENEMIES OF THE PRESENT REGIME AT THIS JUNCTURE IN OUR RELATIONS WITH CHILE. THE BIOGRAPHIC INFORMATION AVAILABLE TO THE DEPARTMENT ON THE MEN WILL DOCUMENT THEIR SENSITIVITY IN SOME DETAIL. MOREOVER, THE SUBJECT MATTER IS OPIC AND THEREFORE FOREIGN INVESTMENT, A MOST SENSITIVE MATTER ON WHICH GOC IS PINNING GREAT HOPES FOR FUTURE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT. RECENT GOC RENUNCIATION OF U.S. AID LENDING FOR FY-78 WAS PREMISED ON DESIRE TO AVOID PUBLICITY WHICH MIGHT DETER FOREIGN INVESTMENT.

4. FINALLY, LEADER OF STUDY GROUP, MR. SIDNEY WEINTRAUB, IS WELL REMEMBERED HERE AS HEAD OF THE AID MISSION DURING THE FREI YEARS. HIS RETIREMENT FROM THE FOREIGN SERVICE AND PRESENT ACADEMIC POSITION NOTWITHSTANDING, HE WILL STILL BE SEEN BY MANY AS A U.S. OFFICIAL. WE THEREFORE HAVE A PICTURE OF A "SENIOR USG OFFICIAL" POKING AROUND AMONG CHILEANS, MANY OF WHOM ARE CONSIDERED TO BE ENEMIES OF PRESENT REGIME, AND IN THIS HIGHLY SENSITIVE AREA. IN THIS CONNECTION SEVERAL SENIOR MEMBERS OF GOVERNMENT, INCLUDING MINISTER OF ECONOMY SERGIO DE CASTRO, ARE ALREADY CONVINCED THAT USG, IN WASHINGTON AND THROUGH EMBASSY SANTIAGO, IS TAKING ACTIVE MEASURES TO DISCOURAGE US INVESTMENT IN CHILE.

5. WE THEREFORE SUGGEST THAT OTHER MEMBERS OF RESEARCH TEAM CONDUCT SUCH INTERVIEWS AS WE CAN ARRANGE, THAT MR. WEINTRAUB DELAY HIS VISIT TO SANTIAGO UNTIL AFTER THE RESEARCHERS HAVE GONE, AND THEN THAT HE NOT IDENTIFY HIMSELF PUBLICLY WITH THE TEAM.

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NOTE BY OC/T: NOT PASSED OPIC.

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